MARVEL COMICS

1ST ISSUE

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MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED

ALL NEW STORIES FEATURING:
GHOST RIDER®!
JOHN BLAZE™!
DARKHOLD™!
NIGHTSTALKERS™!
MORBIUS™!

GHOST RIDER: A RELENTLESS AND UNFORGIVING DEMONIC FORCE OF RETRIBUTION. JOHN BLAZE: A MAN WHO ESCAPED HIS OWN DEMONIC CURSE, ONLY TO BE TEAMED WITH THE ENTITY HE ONCE VOWED TO DESTROY. TOGETHER THEY TRAVEL THE COUNTRY, FIGHTING THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT. THEY ARE. . ..

TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK, IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY...

SURROUNDED BY LEGENDS OF HEADLESS HORSEMEN AND OTHER THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT...

...SLEEPY HOLLOW TERRITORY LIVES ON IN THE IMAGINATION OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.

GHOST RIDER/BLAZE

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE

THE FIRST WINTER'S SNOW BRINGS OUT AN AIR OF MAGIC FOR THE LOCAL RESIDENTS.

TONIGHT SOMETHING ELSE HAS BEEN BROUGHT OUT INTO THE WINTER'S SNOW.

SOMETHING DARK.

SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL.

SOMETHING TO INSPIRE NEW LEGENDS.

LEGENDS OF FEAR.

YOUNG NEWLYWEDS JUST ARRIVED IN TOWN, VENTURE OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

THEY PLAY, OBLIVIOUS TO THE EYES THAT WATCH THEM.

THE EYES THAT STALK THEM.

OMIGOD! ANDY!
DONNA! GET AWAY FROM IT!
I'LL--
SMAK
ANDYYYY... ACHHH!
SO YOUNG.
SO PRETTY.
SO VIBRANT.
KRAK
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?
ANOTHER. SO STRONG...
IF SHE'S HURT I'LL KILL YOU!

...BUT NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH WHAT I'VE BECOME.
DO THEY SEE MY STRENGTH?
DO THEY SEE...?
...SEE...?
AAARRRRR
KRASH
"ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MS. VANRIPPER? I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU CRY OUT.
"OH, BUT THAT'S SILLY OF ME, ISN'T IT?"
YOU HAVEN'T YELLED IN YEARS. BARELY SPEAK ABOVE A WHISPER ANYMORE.
NOT LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS. SUCH A VILE TONGUE YOU HAD.
YOU JUST KEEP WARM NOW. I WORRY ABOUT YOU NEAR THIS DRAFTY WINDOW.
BUT I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU ENJOY WATCHING.

EYES OF THE BEHOLDER

LATER THAT NIGHT...

WRITTEN by *HOWARD MACKIE*
ILLUSTRATED by *KLAUS JANSON*
COLORED by *GREG WRIGHT*
LETTERED by *JANICE CHIANG*

THIS IS THE *THIRD* ONE THIS WEEK, *CHIEF*.

PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO SAY SOME PRETTY STRANGE THINGS.

YEAH, JUST GREAT!

ONE THING THIS TOWN *DOESN'T* NEED IS MORE *LEGENDS*.

LET'S TRY AND WRAP THIS THING UP QUICK BEFORE THE PRESS HAS A FIELD DAY.

I'VE GOT TO RUN THE *ESCAPEE* BACK UP TO *OSSINING*. RADIO ME IF YOU COME UP WITH ANYTHING.

EXCUSE ME, CHIEF, BUT IS THIS MURDER TIED IN WITH THE OTHERS?

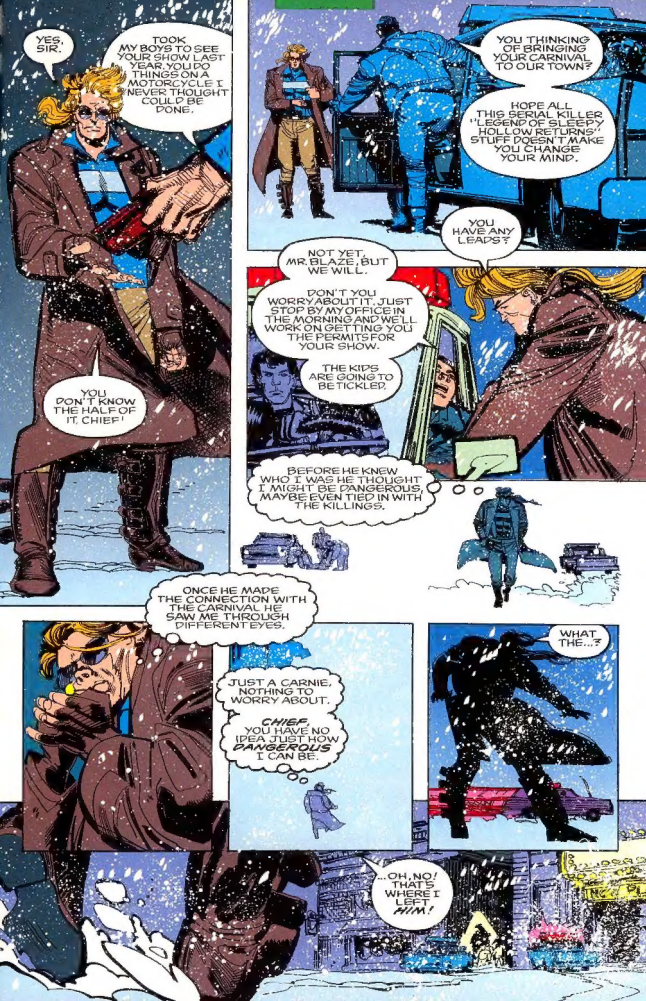
YOU A REPORTER?

NO. JUST PASSING THROUGH AND CONCERNED.

MIND SHOWING SOME I.D., MR. CONCERNED?

BLAZE?

JOHN, BLAZE?


YES, SIR.
TOOK MY BOYS TO SEE YOUR SHOW LAST YEAR. YOU DO THINGS ON A MOTORCYCLE I NEVER THOUGHT COULD BE DONE.
YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT, CHIEF!
YOU THINKING OF BRINGING YOUR CARNIVAL TO OUR TOWN?
HOPE ALL THIS SERIAL KILLER "LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW RETURNS" STUFF DOESN'T MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.
YOU HAVE ANY LEADS?
NOT YET, MR. BLAZE, BUT WE WILL.
DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT IT. JUST STOP BY MY OFFICE IN THE MORNING AND WE'LL WORK ON GETTING YOU THE PERMITS FOR YOUR SHOW.
THE KIDS ARE GOING TO BE TICKLED.
BEFORE HE KNEW WHO I WAS HE THOUGHT I MIGHT BE DANGEROUS. MAYBE EVEN TIED IN WITH THE KILLINGS.
ONCE HE MADE THE CONNECTION WITH THE CARNIVAL HE SAW ME THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES.
JUST A CARNIE. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
CHIEF, YOU HAVE NO IDEA JUST HOW DANGEROUS I CAN BE.
WHAT THE...?
...OH, NO! THAT'S WHERE I LEFT HIM!

HE'S STILL IN THERE! GET HIM! HE'S A MONSTER! THE KILLER! GET HIM!
OKAY, LADY, CALM DOWN!
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
LET'S DO IT.
THIS COULD BE THE PSYCHO WE'VE BEEN AFTER.
HEY, YOU!
FREEZE! OR WE'LL--
I ASKED HIM TO STAY HIDDEN.
KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
I GUESS I WAS ASKING TOO MUCH!
GHOST RIDER?
THREE MEN WERE HURTING THIS WOMAN.
THAT ONE HAS FELT THE PAIN OF MY PENANCE STARE.
THE OTHERS--
THE POLICE ARE OUTSIDE. LET'S LET THEM HANDLE THE OTHERS.
I CANNOT...

THE OTHERS HEADED TO THE ROOF. THEY MUST FEEL THE PAIN.
I KNEW HE WAS GOING TO SAY THAT.
MISS, EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE FINE. THE POLICE WILL BE HERE SOON.
SOONER THAN I'D CARE TO THINK ABOUT.
LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK!
KRAK
NICE TRY, BUDDY! BUT I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET IT!
ONE OF THEM IS RUNNING. I'VE GOT HIM.
YOU WILL FEEL THE WOMAN'S PAIN... AND MUCH MORE!..
STOP RUNNING AND TAKE WHAT'S COMING TO YOU LIKE A MAN!
I FORGOT. AFTER WHAT YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TRIED TO DO...
BOOM
...YOU'RE NOT MUCH OF A MAN.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?
YES.
GOOD. NOW LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE HAVE A RUN-IN WITH THE COPS.
ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO GET TO THE BIKES?
FREEZE!
YEAH, RIGHT!
I'M GOING TO STOP FOLLOWING YOU AROUND ON THOSE QUESTS FOR VENGEANCE UNTIL YOU LEARN TO BE A LITTLE MORE SUBTLE!
BRAKOOM
SEE! IT'S SIMPLE!

NOW THAT I'VE BOUGHT US A LITTLE TIME WITH THE LOCAL POLICE, WHAT DO WE DO?
FIND THE KILLER.
WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?
WHO ARE THESE TWO?
ARE THEY FROM THE OTHER?
DO THEY KNOW WHY THIS HAPPENED TO ME?
IT'S NOT WHAT I EXPECTED.
BUT IT FEELS SO GOOD.
I MUST KEEP KILLING. EXPERIENCING!
JUST LIKE BEFORE WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND PRETTY.
ALL MAKES ME FEEL SO ALIVE AGAIN! I DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT.
FOLLOW THEM AND LEARN WHAT THEY KNOW. MAKE SURE THEY DON'T STOP ME.
OKAY, MS. V. TIME TO GET YOU TUCKED IN TO BED.
YOU'VE HAD A LONG HARD DAY STARING OUT THAT WINDOW.
THOUGH IN THIS WEATHER I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU COULD BE SEEING!

MEANWHILE..
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND THIS KILLER PRETTY FAST...
...AFTER WHAT WE DID BACK THERE, THE COPS ARE GOING TO BE ALL OVER THIS TOWN LOOKING FOR US.
I HAVE MORE RUN-INS WITH THE POLICE WHEN I RIDE WITH YOU
I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET YOU TALK ME INTO TRAIPSING ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY WHEREVER "INNOCENT BLOOD" MIGHT BE SPILLED!
THIS MONSTER MUST BE STOPPED BEFORE HE TAKES MORE LIVES.
YOU FEEL THE PAIN OF THEIR DEATHS AS MUCH AS I DO.
WE DO WHAT WE DO TO STOP THE PAIN... THE VICTIMS'... AND OURS.
WE WILL. WE MUST.
THERE ARE TWO MORE PEOPLE DEAD, THE POLICE HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE, AND I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING THAT YOU ARE RIGHT.
MORE ARE GOING TO DIE IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
AND I HAVE NO IDEA NOW WE CAN FIND THIS LUNATIC.

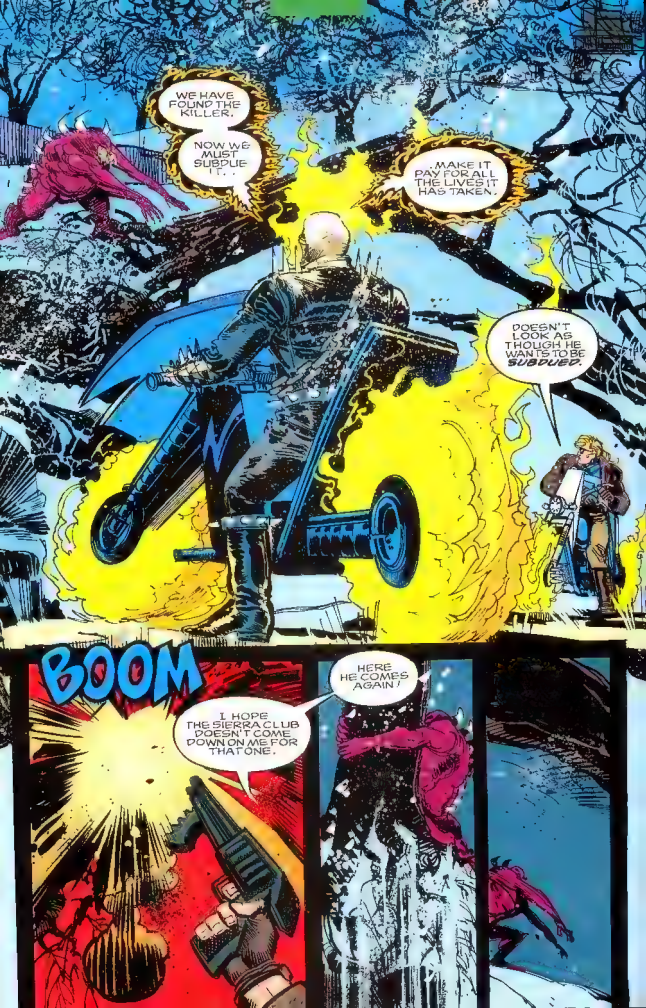
THEY ARE SEARCHING FOR ME!
THEY WANT TO STOP ME
I CANNOT LET THEM TAKE THIS AWAY.
I WILL KILL THEM. CRUSH THEM BEFORE THEY...
HEE HE HEE! GOT YOU!
YEAH, WELL HERE COMES ONE RIGHT BACK AT YOU!
GOOD ONE! BUT BE QUIET OR OUR PARENTS WILL HEAR THAT WE SNUCK OUT!
YEAH! QUIET!
CHILDREN!

SO YOUNG AND VIBRANT.
FULL OF LIFE! FULL OF STRENGTH
HATE THEM.. HATE THEM ALL CRUSH THEM FOR WHAT THEY DID TO ME!
THE TWO ON THE MOTORCYCLES CAN WAIT.
I'LL FIND THEM LATER.
THE CHILDREN...
THE CHILDREN...
..THE CHILDREN.
WHAT KIND OF COAT IS THAT MAN WEARING, BETH?

THAT'S NO COAT, STUPID!
RUN!
YES, RUN!
AS YOU DID SO LONG AGO!
TRY AND RUN BEFORE I CRUSH THE LIFE FROM YOUR HELPLESS LITTLE BODIES.
RUN, BUT IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD THIS TIME.
RUN--
A CHAIN?
FROM WHERE? FROM WHO?
THINK
HIM!
THE ONE WHO LOOKS AS THOUGH HE COULD BE FROM THE OTHER!

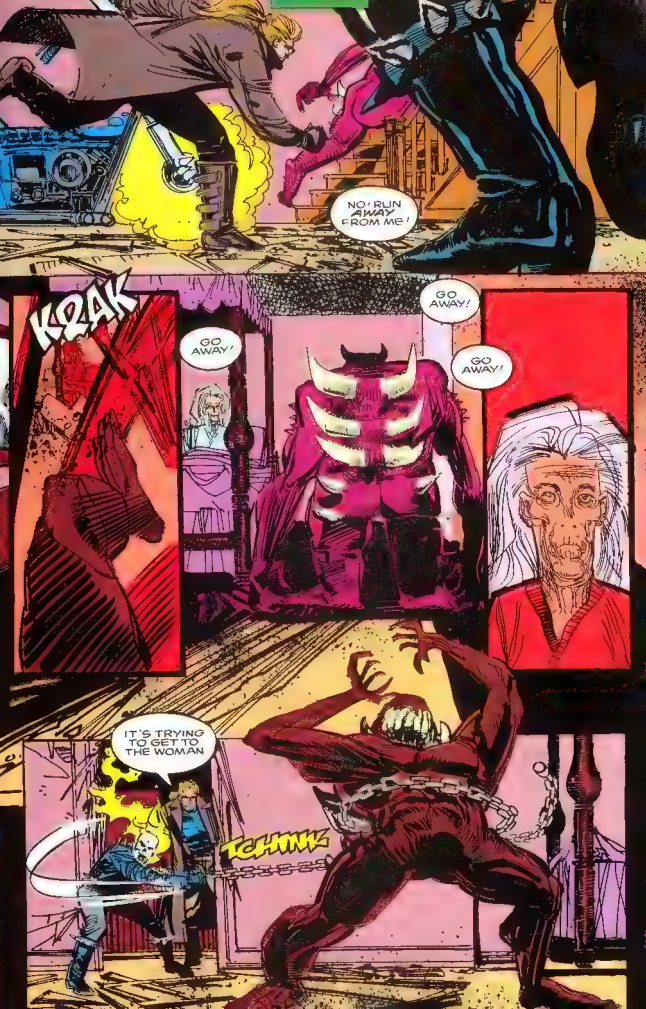
ATTACKING ME?
HE IS FROM THE OTHER.
WHAT HAVE I DONE WRONG?
WHY HAS HE SENT THIS DEMON TO HURT ME?
EVEN IT FEELS GOOD.
AFTER SO LONG FEELING NOTHING, TO FEEL AGAIN.
THE PAIN.
PAIN AND.
...STRENGTH.
THE OTHER GAVE ME BOTH TO USE AS MY OWN
... TO FEEL THIS ONE'S BONES SNAP BENEATH MY POWERFUL ARMS--
BOOM

AAAARRR
...PAIN... OVERWHELMING. LEG FEELS LIKE IT'S ON FIRE!
WHERE? HOW?
FORGOT ABOUT THIS ONE.
HIS GUN SHOOTS FIRE!
IT BURNS SO MUCH MORE PAIN THAN EVEN THIS BODY CAN STAND TO FEEL!
CLIK
MUST FLEE BEFORE HE SHOOTS AGAIN.
MUST ESCAPE
RUN.
HOME?
NO!
STOP!
GO ANYWHERE ELSE. DON'T BRING THEM HERE. DON'T BRING THEM TO ME.

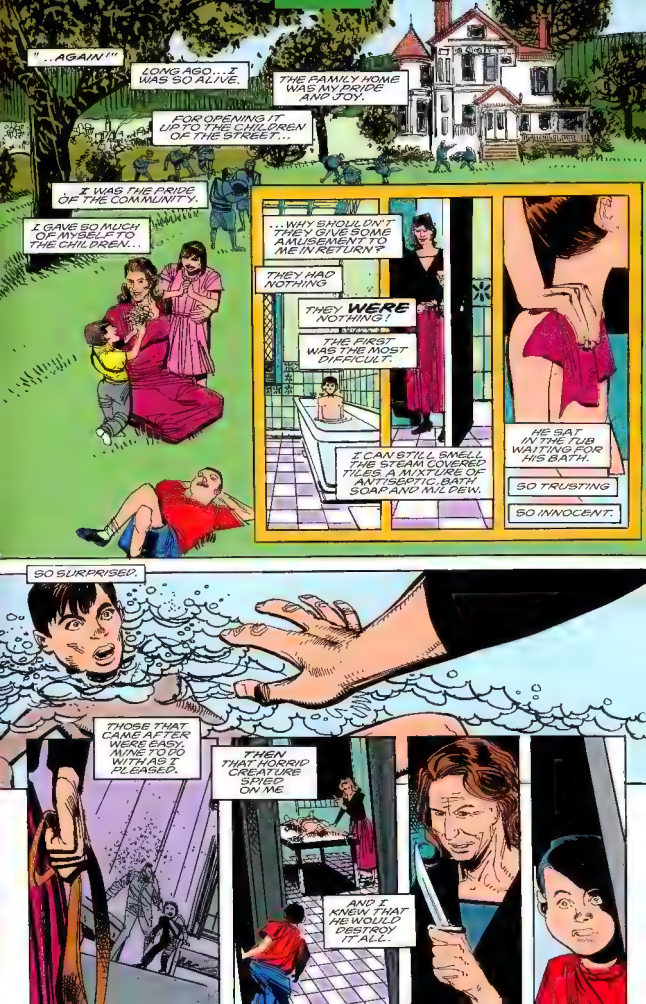

WE HAVE FOUND THE KILLER.
NOW WE MUST SUBDUE IT.
MAKE IT PAY FOR ALL THE LIVES IT HAS TAKEN.
DOESN'T LOOK AS THOUGH HE WANTS TO BE SUBDUED.
BOOM
I HOPE THE SIERRA CLUB DOESN'T COME DOWN ON ME FOR THAT ONE.
HERE HE COMES AGAIN!

FWAM
FHNK
IT SEEKS TO DELAY US. TO ESCAPE IT'S INEVITABLE FATE.
CAN YOU BLAME IT?
WE DO PLAN ON KILLING IT...
...DON'T WE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS? ONE OF THE LILIN? ONE OF MEPHISTO'S DEMONS?
THERE IS THE FEEL OF ANOTHER DARKER HAND BEHIND THIS ONE.
BUT WHATEVER IT IS...
...IT WILL PAY FOR WHAT IT HAS DONE WITH ITS LIFE.

NO!
DO NOT COME HERE!
THEY'RE FOLLOWING YOU!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAV
FWAK
NO!
TURN THIS BODY AROUND.
I AM IN CONTROL!
THE OTHER PROMISED!
TURN AROUND BEFORE THEY...
FWAM
TOO LATE! RUN!

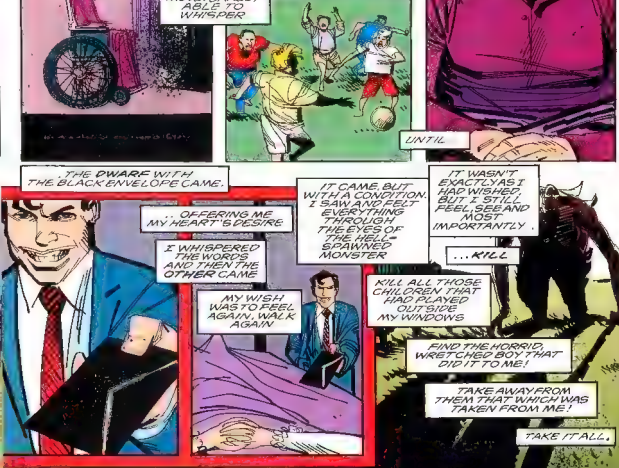

NO, RUN AWAY FROM ME!
KRAK
GO AWAY!
GO AWAY!
GO AWAY!
IT'S TRYING TO GET TO THE WOMAN
TCHHHK

THIS WILL *NOT* HAPPEN!
PREPARE YOURSELF, BLAZE..
..YOU KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE!
I'M *ALWAYS* PREPARED FOR *THIS*!
CLIK
BOOM
ARRRRR
NOOOOOOOO!
SO DARK. SO COLD.. ALL *FEELING* GONE..


"..AGAIN!"
LONG AGO...I WAS SO ALIVE.
THE FAMILY HOME WAS MY PRIDE AND JOY.
FOR OPENING IT UP TO THE CHILDREN OF THE STREET...
I WAS THE PRIDE OF THE COMMUNITY.
I GAVE SO MUCH OF MYSELF TO THE CHILDREN..
...WHY SHOULDN'T THEY GIVE SOME AMUSEMENT TO ME IN RETURN?
THEY HAD NOTHING
THEY WERE NOTHING!
THE FIRST WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT.
I CAN STILL SMELL THE STEAM COVERED TILES, A MIXTURE OF ANTISEPTIC BATH SOAP AND M/L DEW.
HE SAT IN THE TUB WAITING FOR HIS BATH.
SO TRUSTING
SO INNOCENT.
SO SURPRISED.
THOSE THAT CAME AFTER WERE EASY. MINE TO DO WITH AS I PLEASED.
THEN THAT HORRID CREATURE SAVED ON ME.
AND I KNEW THAT HE WOULD DESTROY IT ALL.

THE THRILL OF THE CHASE WAS EXHILARATING, EVEN THOUGH I KNEW IT WOULD BE BRIEF
TOO BRIEF AND TOO LONG!

FOR FORTY YEARS I SAT A BROKEN WOMAN.
THE BRAT RECALLED NO ONE WAS WISER.
BUT I SAT.
UNABLE TO MOVE. BARELY ABLE TO WHISPER.
SAT AND WATCHED AS THEY PLAYED OUTSIDE MY WINDOW.
SAT HATING THEM FOR THEIR YOUTH, THEIR VITALITY, THEIR FEELINGS.
UNTIL


THE DWARF WITH THE BLACK ENVELOPE CAME.
...OFFERING ME MY HEART'S DESIRE
I WHISPERED THE WORDS AND THEN THE OTHER CAME
MY WISH WAS TO FEEL AGAIN, WALK AGAIN
IT CAME BUT WITH A CONDITION. I SAW AND FELT EVERYTHING THROUGH THE EYES OF THE HELL-SPAWNED MONSTER.
IT WASN'T EXACTLY AS I HAD WISHED, BUT I STILL FEEL, SEE AND MOST IMPORTANTLY
...KILL
KILL ALL THOSE CHILDREN THAT HAD PLAYED OUTSIDE MY WINDOWS
FIND THE HORRID, WRETCHED BOY THAT DID IT TO ME!
TAKE AWAY FROM THEM THAT WHICH WAS TAKEN FROM ME!
TAKE IT ALL.

my lord.
IT WAS HER
THIS ENVELOPE... THE DWARF. ONE OF THE DARKHOLD PAGES. IT LET OUT THAT EVIL THAT HAS BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE HER FOR ALL THESE YEARS
SHE SOUGHT TO FREE THE PRISON OF HER WITHERED AND DECAYED BODY THROUGH THE MONSTER.
THE MONSTER WAS CONTROLLED BY HER. IT WAS HER ATTEMPT TO EXPERIENCE HER CORRUPT LIFE ONCE MORE.
SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE RECENT KILLINGS AND MORE; THE THINGS THAT SHE'S DONE!

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, THEN SHE MUST FEEL THE PAIN OF...
...MY PENANCE STARE!
CLARISSE VAN RIPPER'S FONDEST WISH IS GRANTED.
EVERY FIBER OF HER BEING EXPLODES WITH FEELING AT THE TOUCH OF HELLFIRE.
FEELINGS OF PAIN AND DEATH TEAR AT HER HEART AND SOUL.
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FORTY YEARS, TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK HEARS A VOICE OF A CITIZEN IT THOUGHT LONG SILENCED.
NOOOOOOOOOOOOO
CLARISSE VAN RIPPER'S VOICE RISES ABOVE THAT OF A WHISPER
WITHIN THE SHELL OF HER BODY THE FEELINGS OF VENGEANCE WILL ECHO OVER AND OVER AGAIN
AND A NEW LEGEND IS BORN IN SLEEPY HOLLOW

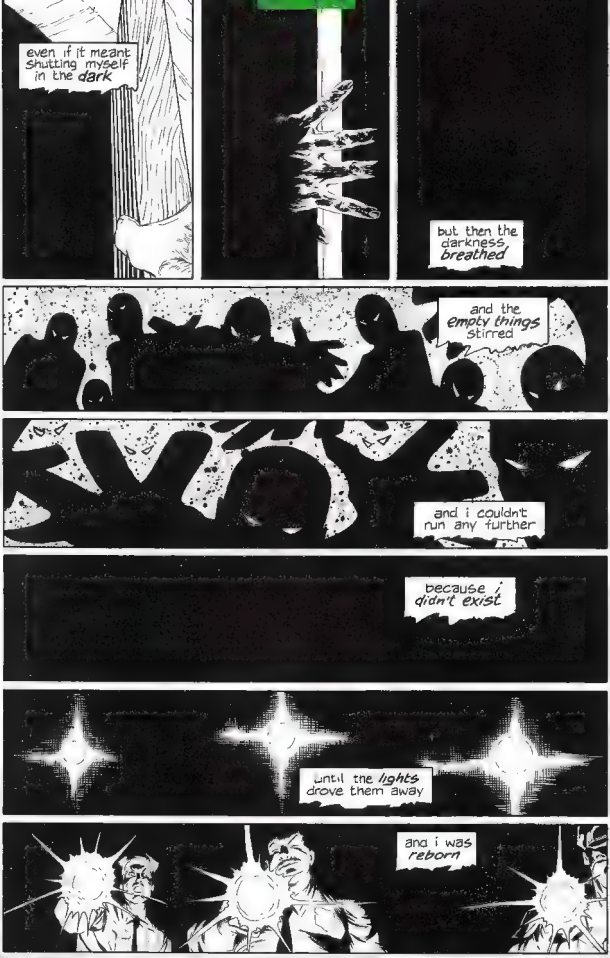
THE ANCIENTS THOUGHT THAT SCATTERING ITS INDESTRUCTIBLE PAGES WOULD END THE EVIL . . . END THE ATROCITIES AUTHORED BY THE EVIL ELDER GOD CHTHON. BUT NOW SOMEONE IS DELIVERING THOSE PAGES INTO UNSUSPECTING HANDS, BRINGING A TERRIBLE CURSE TO EACH DOOMED SOUL THAT USES THEM. NOW THE STRUGGLE BEGINS TO REDEEM THE PAGES — BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .
DARKHOLD
FROM THE LIGHT, DARKNESS!
by the time you read this, i'll have escaped again
must
because locked up in this cell, i see things
things that point and pull and blame
no room to run to breathe
CHRIS "JAILBAIT" COOPER WRITER
JOE "LUKE" QUESADA PENCILER
JIMMY "YARDSTICK" PALMIOTTI INKER
DAVE THE BARBARIAN LETTERER
i'd do anything to get away
even shake hands with the devil himself
PSSST!

YOU'RE THE INMATE THEY CALL "MERCY," RIGHT?
WHAT A HANDY MONIKER.
WHAT THE--
BITE YOUR TONGUE!
GOT SOMETHIN' FOR YA, MERCY.
JUST READ WHAT'S IN HERE--ALOUD -- AND YOU'LL SEE THINGS IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT.
I GUARANTEE IT.
BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT.
HEY, SHORTY! HOW'D YOU--
GONE?? HE'S GOT A WAY IN AND OUT OF HERE! THIS LETTER MUST EXPLAIN HOW!
WHAT?! THIS AIN'T ENGLISH! I CAN'T--
--CAN'T--
ENAMORATH! EMMORETH! BA'AL SET ELIANATH!

WE ARE.. OTHER.
i don't know what said, but a crazy "horse" answered
IT MOUNTS US.
the horse's kiss felt nice
WE OFFER IT FREEDOM FROM ITS PHYSICAL CONFINES.
IT RIDES WITH US TO THE LIGHT...
...AND THE DARKNESS THAT COMES FROM THE LIGHT.
WAIT-- LOST MY GRIP!
NOOOOOO!

I came to in the woods outside the prison
another inmate moving with me
ARRO
he heard it too-- hounds on our trail
and started running
something was wrong with my eyes-- I couldn't see colors
only black and white
shelter ahead-- if we could just reach it in time
and there was someone else
GRAAARR!

we both went down, we both tried to scream
but only his voice cried out
YAAAA--
what had that dwarf done to me?
pain had me seeing things again
but this was different-- she came not to blame, but to warn
had to end this quickly
THUNK
RRAARRAWEEE
couldn't remember her name
she was still trying to warn me -- of course, she couldn't speak
i'd seen to that years ago
hounds closing in, had to hide


even if it meant shutting myself in the dark
but then the darkness breathed
and the empty things stirred
and i couldn't run any further
because i didn't exist
until the lights drove them away
and i was reborn

they're waiting
waiting for darkness, to claim me again
so by the time you read this, i'll have escaped
SKRITCH SKRITCH
i must, before the darkness comes
LIGHTS OUT IN FIVE MINUTES!
in the only way i have left
SPEAK
'NORMAN ZACHOS CALLED HIM 'MERCY' CAUSE INSTEAD OF KILLING HIS VICTIMS...
"...HE CUT OFF THEIR HANDS AND TONGUES SO THEY COULDN'T I.D. HIM.
FIGURED THAT WAS MORE MERCIFUL.
by the time you
have escap
"WE FOUND THIS IN HIS CELL. HE SCRATCHED THOSE RAMBLINGS DOWN IN PENCIL...
"THE SAME PENCIL HE PLUNGED THROUGH HIS EYE SOCKET INTO HIS BRAIN."
by the time yo
have esc
DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUFF IS.

NARDEN, HIS FILE SAID HE WAS CLAUSTRO-PHOBIC -- AFRAID OF CONFINED SPACES.
GUESS BEING LOCKED UP WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM, AND HIS MIND SNAPPED.
BELIEVE SO, AGENT BUCHANAN, DOCTORS.
DON'T KNOW WHY INTERPOL IS INTERESTED IN A PSYCHO LIKE HIM...
BUT YOU'RE FREE TO EXAMINE THE BODY.
THE DARKHOLD PAGE DESCRIBES LIFE IN A DARK PLACE THAT ONLY EXISTS WHERE THERE IS NO LIGHT.
THAT'S A CONTRADICTION LOUISE.
AND WHENEVER ALL LIGHT IS GONE THE PAGE'S VICTIM IS CONSIGNED TO OBLIVION.
AND THE THINGS THAT DWELL THEREIN.
HE SAW EVERYTHING IN LIGHT AND DARK IMAGES...
...SAID ANOTHER INMATE FOLLOWED HIM, YET WE KNOW ONLY HE ESCAPED...
...ALL IN A PLACE THAT'S DARKNESS FROM LIGHT ? WHERE COULD THAT BE ?
"I'm here! my body's dead but I wasn't in my body -- I'm right here!"

SOME MYSTERIES WE'LL NEVER UNRAVEL, VICKI.
YOUR VISIONS LED US HERE TOO LATE, MONTESI.
BUT AT LEAST THIS TORTURED SOUL'S AT PEACE NOW, EH?
'no, wait...
'no--please don't do this..
"i'm right here?! i'm--"
THUD!
The End

IN THE NORTH END OF BOSTON, CULTURAL ETHNICITY PAYS TRIBUTE TO ICONS WITH COLD CASH -
DON'T BE SCARED NOW, MARIA!
I'M NOT, UNCLE BOBBY!
NO REASON TO BE SCARED!
AND THE MODERN DAY VESTIGES OF ARCANE RITUAL.
FOR LIKE THE MILLIONTH TIME, I'M NOT!
GIRL SAID SHE AIN'T SCARED, BOB!
SHOULDN'T BE! THIS RIG'S SAFE AS WHEN FAT DOLLY WAS THE FIRST LITTLE ANGEL RIDIN' DOWN TO MEET THE MADONNA!
'COURSE, THAT WAS '56, AND SHE WASN'T "FAT" DOLLY THEN!
SURE YOU'RE NOT SCARED, NOW?
OKAY, OKAY! I'M SCARED-- EEK! HAPPY NOW?
SILLY HEAP! WHAT'S THERE TO BE SCARED OF?!

URRK
PRAYERS WERE INVENTED TO PROTECT AGAINST THE ANSWER TO SUCH QUESTIONS
CELEBRATIONS LIKE THIS ONE ARE ALL THAT REMAIN OF MORE PRIMAL CEREMONIES SUPPORTING THE GODS OF LIGHT.
UNCLE BOBBY!
WHILE THE FORCES OF DARKNESS RAGE, BESTIAL FURY HUNGRY TO TEAR THROUGH THE THIN VENEER OF NORMALITY.
THE WALLS BETWEEN THE NATURAL WORLD AND THE UNNATURAL HAVE BEGUN TO CRUMBLE--
POOR CHILD... YOU'RE JUST A PAWN IN ALL THIS!
T-THIS ISN'T.
--FOUL THINGS BREAKING THROUGH TO HUNT IN SERVICE TO OBSCENITIES WITH NAMES LIKE LILITH AND BEELZEBOUL.
BUT ANIMATE GARGOYLES ARE FAR FROM THE ONLY PREDATORS OUT AND ABOUT.
PLEASE NO
I THOUGHT SHE WAS MEAT!
THAT, TOO A PAWN AND MEAT!

HANNIBAL KING, TRAPPED BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH BY TERRIFYING VAMPIRIC POWERS BLADE, MENACING COLD STEEL IN HAND FOR THE HUNT. FRANK DRAKE, ARMED WITH A DEADLY MIX OF HIGH TECH AND ARCANE. FOREVER CURSED BY THE OCCULT. THEY WAGE WAR ON THE SUPERNATURAL BEFORE IT INFECTS MORE INNOCENT LIVES. STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .
--THERE ARE OTHER STALKERS ON THE LOOSE WHOSE QUARRY IS THE NIGHT ITSELF
LET HER GO AND WE MAKE IT QUICK
GIVE US A HARD TIME AND SUFFER.
MY VOTE IS FOR THE HARD TIME
ON THE WINGS OF ANGELS
D G CHICHESTER - WRITER
CYNTHIA MARTIN - PENCILS
JOE RUBINSTEIN - INKS
JOHN KALISZ - COLORS
L LOIS BUHALIS - LETTERS

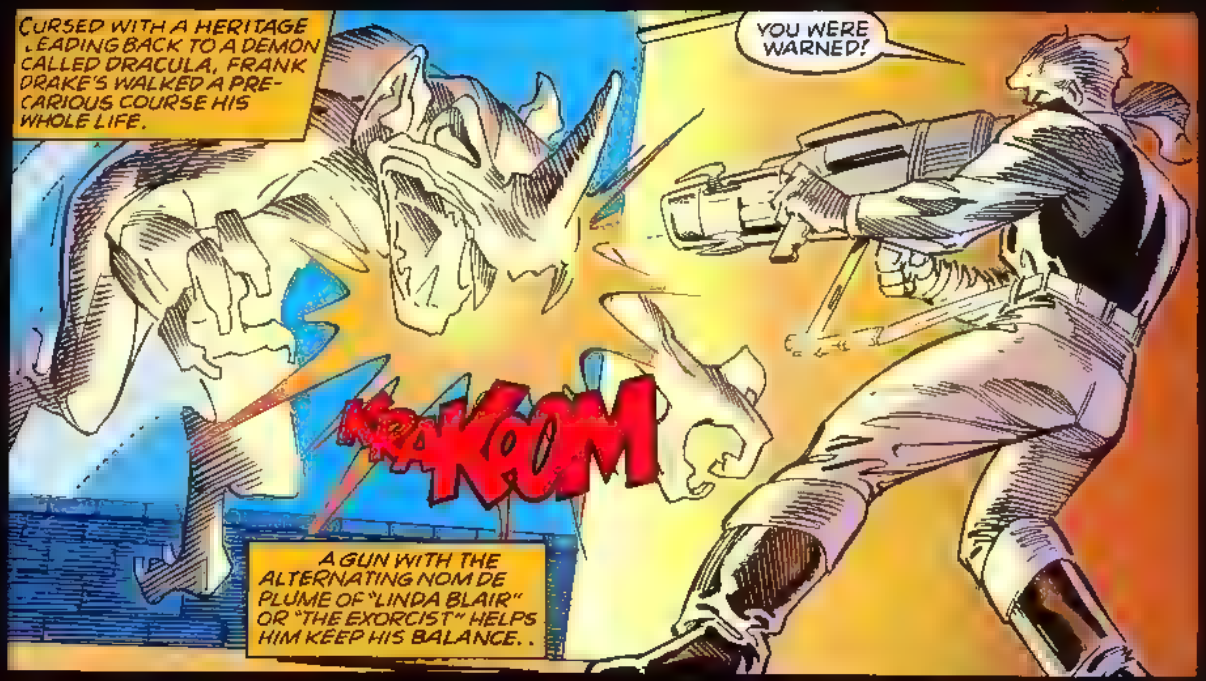
OFFICIALLY, THEY'RE BORDERLINE INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES". AFTER HOURS THEY'RE THE NIGHTSTALKERS"
THE GIRL HAS SIGNIFICANCE! HER ROLE HERE IS A HATED SYMBOL OF GOOD OVER EVIL!
EACH MAN'S LIFE BLASPHEMED BY THE OCCULT
YOU'RE JUST SOMETHING TO FILL OUR BELLIES.
ARRGK
ON A DIET PLAN, HUH?
KRAAK
TOGETHER VOWING TO ERADICATE ALL FORMS OF THE SUPERNATURAL BEFORE IT CAN DEBASE ANOTHER INNOCENT
THIS SHOULD HELP KEEP YOUR MIND OFF YOUR APPETITE--
--GET 'IM, BOYS!
I HAVE RAISED SUB-LIFE FROM THE SWAMPS OF THE ABYSS
TRAPPED BETWEEN SPECIES, HANNIBAL KING COMMANDS THE BLACK POWER OF A VAMPIRE IN AN ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY WHAT'S LEFT OF HIS HUMANITY
--NOT TO MENTION WHAT I'M UP TO!
YOUR PATHETIC MASTERY OF MERE RODENTS MEANS LESS THAN NOTHING TO ME!

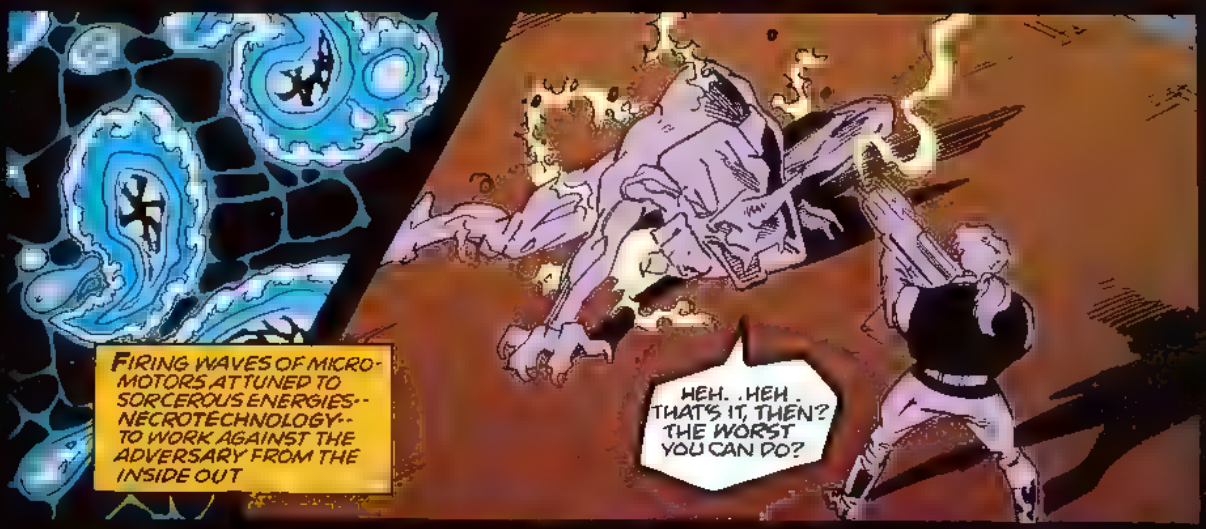
IT'S JUST A DISTRACTION-- YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET NASTY ABOUT IT!
AIIEEGG! MY WINGS! WHAT ARE YOU--

REALLY. THEY DON'T DO A THING FOR YOU!
SNRAPP

YOU'RE LOOKING BETTER ALREADY. LOSE A FEW POUNDS?
OR JUST YOUR SORRY EXCUSE FOR A LIFE?

THEY'RE... THEY'RE JUST AS BAD...
LOOKING IN TO THE SHADOWS, YOUNG EYES HAVE TROUBLE DISCERNING FIEND FROM FRIEND
A DIFFERENCE OF A FINE LINE, TO BE SURE


CURSED WITH A HERITAGE LEADING BACK TO A DEMON CALLED DRACULA, FRANK DRAKE'S WALKED A PRECARIOUS COURSE HIS WHOLE LIFE.
YOU WERE WARNED!
KRAKOOM
A GUN WITH THE ALTERNATING NOM DE PLUME OF "LINDA BLAIR" OR "THE EXORCIST" HELPS HIM KEEP HIS BALANCE..

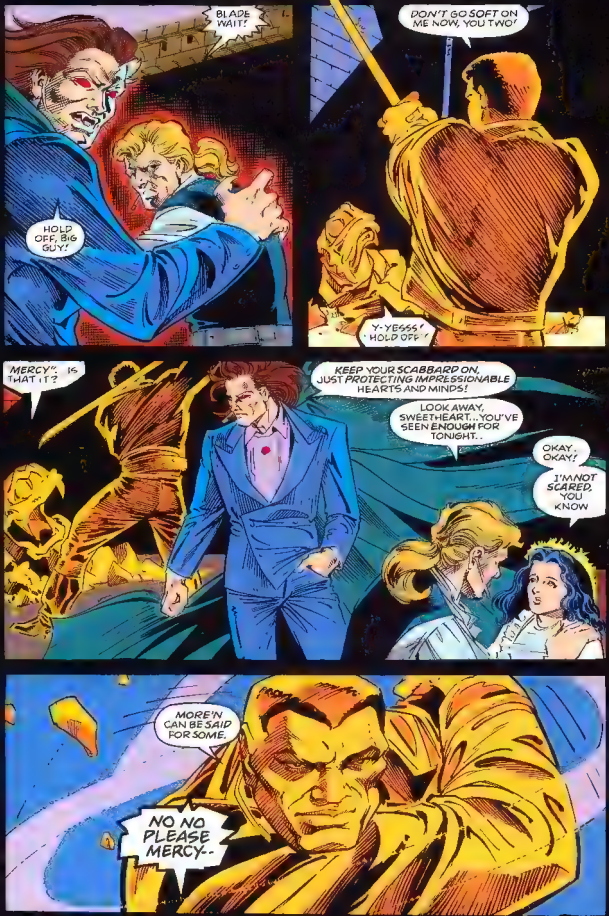

FIRING WAVES OF MICRO-MOTORS ATTUNED TO SORCEROUS ENERGIES--NECROTECHNOLOGY--TO WORK AGAINST THE ADVERSARY FROM THE INSIDE OUT
HEH. .HEH . THAT'S IT, THEN? THE WORST YOU CAN DO?

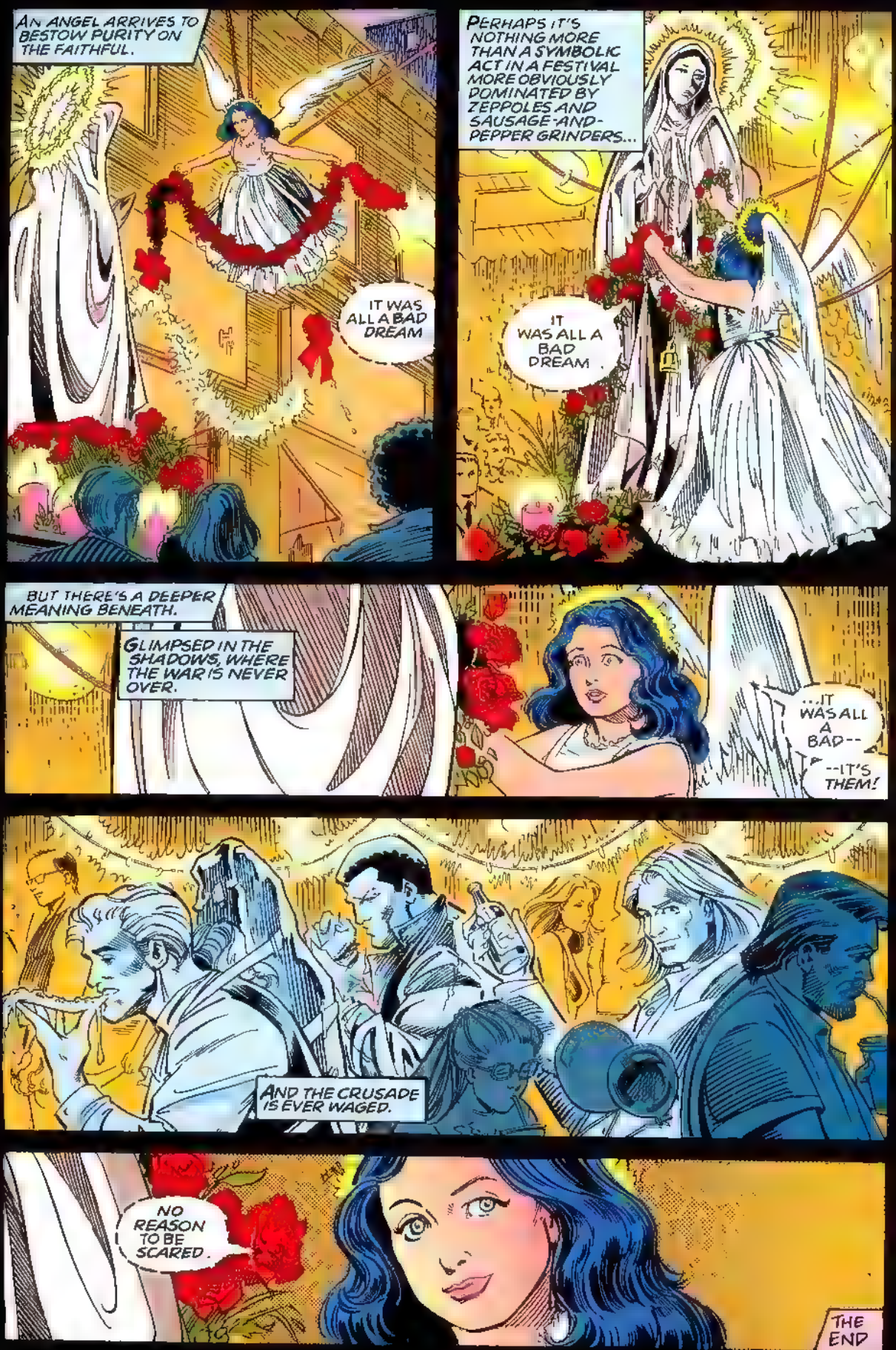
NOW YOU, YOU'LL SHRIEK WITH THE WORST I CAN DO!

YOU KNOW, I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR YOU--

KEEP YOUR WEAK COMPASSION TO YOURSELF, HUMAN. IT HAS NO PLACE
-NO
--ALMOST
TRKRAAKLE
A- ALL R GHT
.ALL RIGHT!
THE SHADOWS SPREAD, THE VIEW FROM WITHOUT BEGINNING TO SHIFT TO AN INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

THAT'S THE ONLY WAY BLADE'S EVER SEEN THE WORLD.
I WAS AFRAID YOU'D TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT.
THANKS.
SLAAKT
ATTACKING THE GIRL IT WAS ONLY A TOKEN SACRIFICE! WE'LL STAND DOWN. WE'LL ADMIT DEFEAT!
GOT THAT
THWIP
BORN FROM A COOLING CORPSE IN THE AFTERMATH OF A BLOODSUCKER'S ATTACK...
THE SHREDDED WICKEDNESS OF WHAT HAD BEEN HIS MOTHER FOREVER IMPRINTED ON BLADE'S EYES.
SLAKK
ONLY THE LIGHT GLINTING OFF COLD STEEL HAS EVER HAD THE POWER TO BANISH THAT HATEFUL IMAGE
SLAASSHK
METAL FORGED IN VENGEANCE.
THRAAK
P-PLEASE..
HAMMERED BY FURY.
NOT IN MY VOCABULARY.
TEMPERED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS


BLADE WAIT!
HOLD OFF, BIG GUY!
DON'T GO SOFT ON ME NOW, YOU TWO!
Y-YEssss! HOLD OFF!
"MERCY". IS THAT IT?
KEEP YOUR SCABBARD ON, JUST PROTECTING IMPRESSIONABLE HEARTS AND MINDS!
LOOK AWAY, SWEETHEART... YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH FOR TONIGHT..
OKAY, OKAY!
I'M NOT SCARED, YOU KNOW
MORE'N CAN BE SAID FOR SOME.
NO NO PLEASE MERCY--


AN ANGEL ARRIVES TO BESTOW PURITY ON THE FAITHFUL.
IT WAS ALL A BAD DREAM
PERHAPS IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A SYMBOLIC ACT IN A FESTIVAL MORE OBVIOUSLY DOMINATED BY ZEPPOLES AND SAUSAGE-AND-PEPPER GRINDERS...
IT WAS ALL A BAD DREAM.
BUT THERE'S A DEEPER MEANING BENEATH.
GLIMPSED IN THE SHADOWS, WHERE THE WAR IS NEVER OVER.
...IT WAS ALL A BAD--
--IT'S THEM!
AND THE CRUSADE IS EVER WAGED.
NO REASON TO BE SCARED.
THE END

AS EXPERIMENTAL CURE FOR A RARE BLOOD DISEASE HAS TRANSFORMED NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING SCIENTIST DR. MICHAEL MORBIUS INTO THE WORLD'S MOST FEARSOME PREDATOR — A LIVING VAMPIRE WHO HAS SWORN TO NEVER AGAIN DRINK THE BLOOD OF AN INNOCENT. UNTIL HE CAN FIND A CURE FOR HIS AFFLICTION, HE STALKS NEW YORK CITY BY NIGHT, PREYING UPON THE VERY CRIMINALS WITH HIS OWN TORTURED CONSCIENCE! STAN LEE PRESENTS...

MORBIUS

ABOVE ALL IT IS THE HUNGER THAT DRIVES HIM.

EVEN NOW, AS THE DARK-CLAD CREATURE THAT HAD ONCE BEEN DOCTOR MICHAEL MORBIUS SCRAMBLES ACROSS THE BENIGHTED ROOFTOPS WITH AN ANIMALISTIC URGENCY--

--HE CAN ALMOST FEEL THE RICH RED LIQUID POURING PAST HIS RAZORED FANGS--

-- CAN ALMOST TASTE ITS SHINING COPPER WARMTH--

--WHICH IS WHY THE ELECTRIFIED NETTING THAT SUDDENLY DROPS OVER HIS AIRBORNE FORM TAKES HIM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE!

SAAARRRGGHHH!!

TZZZZAK!

BLOOD IS THICKER...!

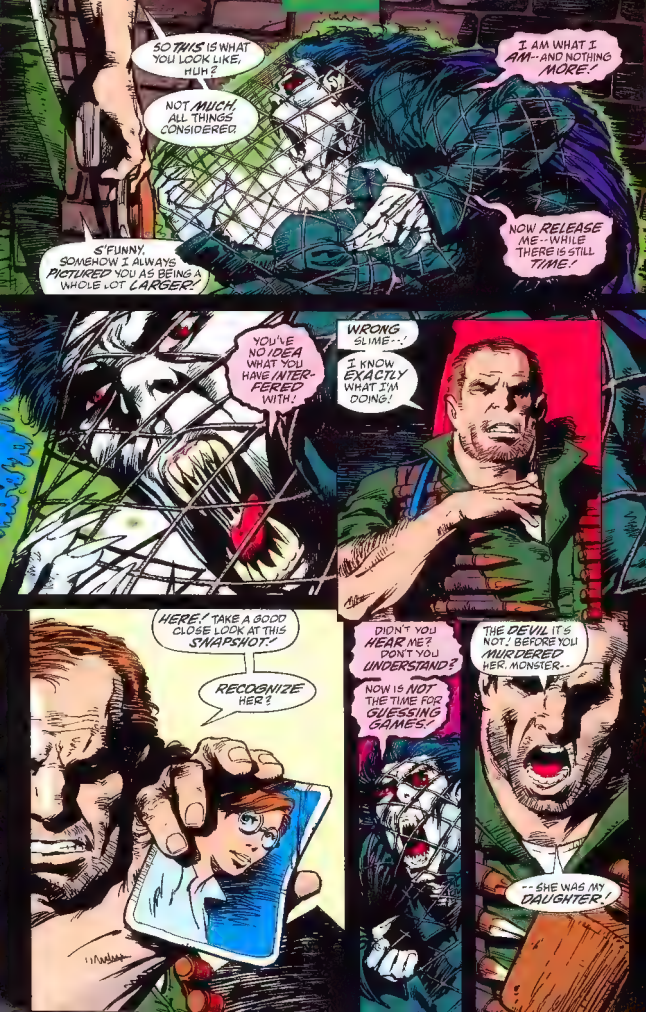
LEN WEIN
WRITER

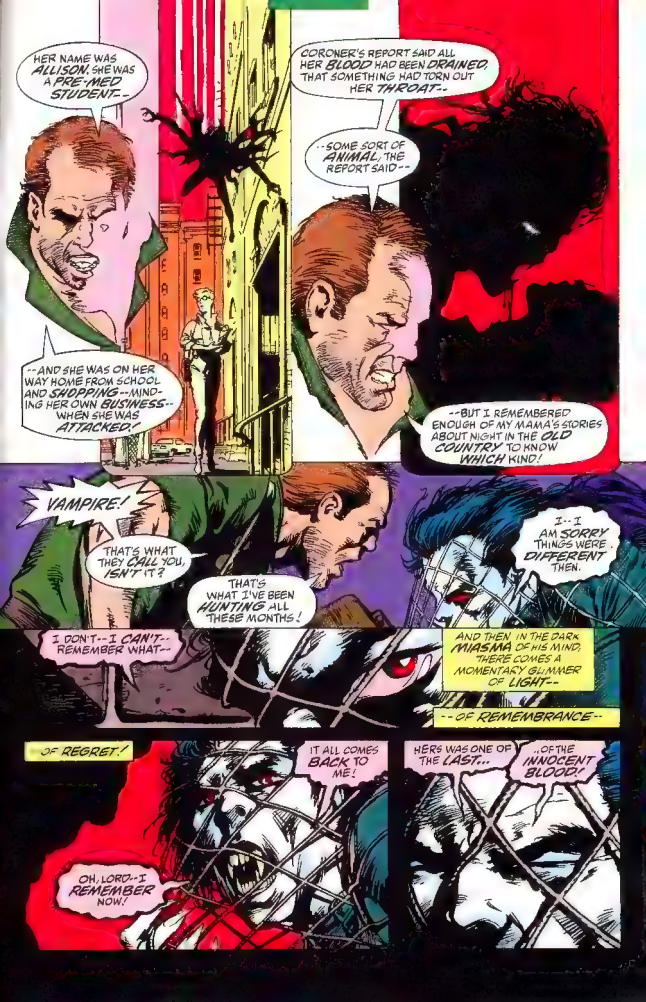
JERRY BINGHAM
ILLUSTRATOR

RICK PARKER
LETTERER

TOM SMITH
COLORIST

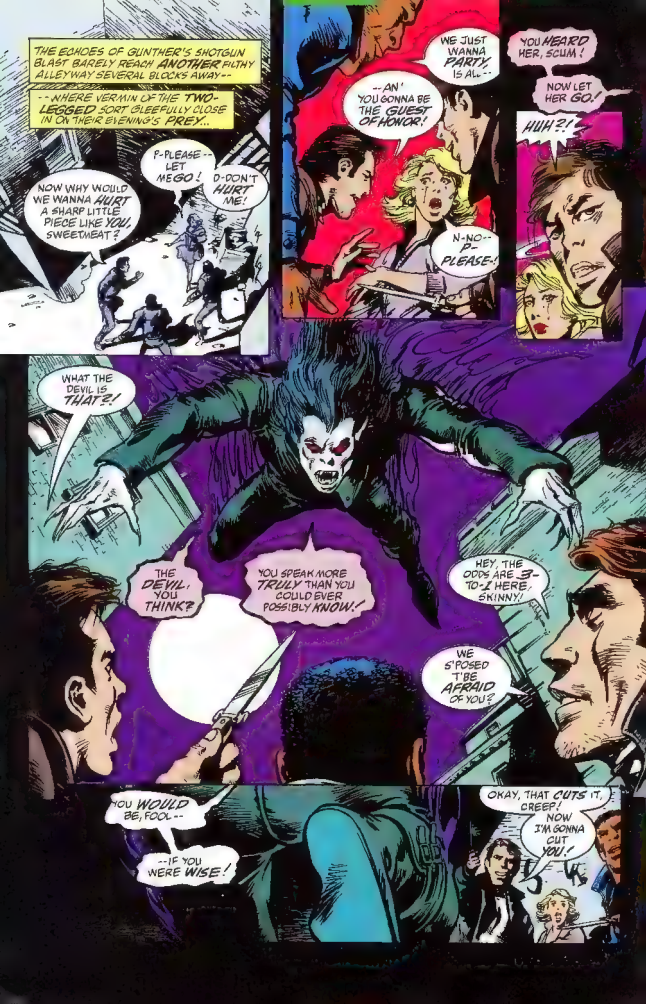
HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM MOMENTARILY PARALYZED BY THE STAGGERING JOLT, THE LIVING VAMPIRE PLUMMETS LIKE SOME GROTESQUE WOUNDED BIRD--
--TO PLUNGE INTO THE FILTHY ALLEY BELOW LIKE ONE MORE DISCARDED PIECE OF GARBAGE...
HUUUNK!
WHUDD!
NO! NOT NOW!
MUST BREAK FREE--!
NO TIME TO WASTE!
TOO MUCH AT STAKE--!
STAKE!
NOW THERE'S AN APPROPRIATE WORD, IF EVER I HEARD ONE!
WHO--?!
YOU DON'T KNOW ME, DO YOU?
BUT THEN, I GUESS THERE'S NO REAL REASON WHY YOU SHOULD!
IN THAT CASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF, MONSTER...
MY NAME IS GUNTHER--
--AND I'VE WAITED A REAL LONG TIME TO KILL YOU!


SO THIS IS WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE, HUH?
NOT MUCH, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
I AM WHAT I AM--AND NOTHING MORE!
S'FUNNY, SOMEHOW I ALWAYS PICTURED YOU AS BEING A WHOLE LOT LARGER!
NOW RELEASE ME--WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME!
YOU'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU HAVE INTERFERED WITH!
WRONG SLIME--!
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING!
HERE! TAKE A GOOD CLOSE LOOK AT THIS SNAPSHOT!
RECOGNIZE HER?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR GUESSING GAMES.
THE DEVIL IT IS NOT! BEFORE YOU MURDERED HER, MONSTER--
--SHE WAS MY DAUGHTER!


HER NAME WAS ALLISON, SHE WAS A PRE-MED STUDENT--
--AND SHE WAS ON HER WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL AND SHOPPING--MINDING HER OWN BUSINESS--WHEN SHE WAS ATTACKED!
CORONER'S REPORT SAID ALL HER BLOOD HAD BEEN DRAINED, THAT SOMETHING HAD TORN OUT HER THROAT--
--SOME SORT OF ANIMAL, THE REPORT SAID--
--BUT I REMEMBERED ENOUGH OF MY MAMA'S STORIES ABOUT NIGHT IN THE OLD COUNTRY TO KNOW WHICH KIND!
VAMPIRE!
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL YOU, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN HUNTING ALL THESE MONTHS!
I--I AM SORRY THINGS WERE DIFFERENT THEN.
I DON'T--I CAN'T--REMEMBER WHAT--
AND THEN IN THE DARK MIASMA OF HIS MIND, THERE COMES A MOMENTARY GLIMMER OF LIGHT--
--OF REMEMBRANCE--
--OF REGRET!
IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME!
OH, LORD--I REMEMBER NOW!
HERS WAS ONE OF THE LAST...
...OF THE INNOCENT BLOOD!

THEN YOU ACTUALLY ADMIT YOU KILLED HER?
THE SADDEST SORT, I FEAR...
...ONE WHO REMEMBERS HOW IT FELT TO BE A MAN!
WHAT SORT OF MONSTER ARE YOU?
"ONCE I WAS MICHAEL MORBIUS, A NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING BIOLOGIST--DYING OF A RARE BLOOD DISEASE!
"DESPERATE TO FIND A CURE I EXPERIMENTED WITH STRANGE UNTESTED SERUMS--EXTRACTED FROM THE BLOOD OF VAMPIRE BATS--AND WORSE!
"MY TREATMENTS STAVED OFF THE DISEASE--BUT INSTEAD TRANS-FORMED ME INTO A CREATURE WHO HAD TO DRINK HUMAN BLOOD TO SURVIVE...
"...IN SHORT, A LIVING VAMPIRE!
"FOR FAR TOO LONG A TIME, I FED ON THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS--
"...UNTIL I WAS FINALLY CAPTURED BY STUNT CYCLIST JOHN BLAZE AND THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE KNOWN ONLY AS THE GHOST RIDER.
"--BUT IT WAS MY HEART WHICH WAS CHANGED THE MOST!"*
"NOW I AM SWORN TO DRINK ONLY THE BLOOD OF THE WICKED. THE GUILTY--
AND UNLESS YOU FREE ME IMMEDIATELY--
--YET ANOTHER INNOCENT LIFE IS ABOUT TO BE FORFEIT!
"--OF THOSE WHO TRULY DESERVE TO DIE!"
"ATTEMPTING TO CURE ME THEY INADVERTENTLY AIDED OTHERS IN MUTATING MY BODY EVEN FURTHER--
* AS DETAILED IN MORBIUS #1.

I--I DIDN'T KNOW--!
I THOUGHT THAT YOU-- THAT I--
NO! WHAT AM I THINKING?!
YOU HAVE TO DIE!!
I HAVE TO DESTROY YOU!
ENOUGH!!
HOW--?!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN MAKE IT UP TO ALISON-- THE ONLY WAY--!
I'M FAR STRONGER THAN I LOOK GUNTHER--
--AND A LITTLE ADRENALINE CAN BE A DANGEROUS THING!
NOW BACK OFF--
--AND LEAVE ME TO MY WORK!
SKRAKK!
NO! I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE ME!
THERE'S ENOUGH SILVER IN THIS BUCK-SHOT TO--HUH?!
DON'T BE CRAZY! THAT IS ONLY PROOF AGAINST TRUE VAMPIRES! THERE'S NO MORE TIME TO WASTE!
BOOM BOOM
I TOLD YOU THERE WAS A LIFE AT STAKE HERE, GUNTHER!
IF YOU STILL DON'T BELIEVE ME, THEN FOLLOW ME--
--IF YOU CAN!


THE ECHOES OF GUNTHER'S SHOTGUN BLAST BARELY REACH ANOTHER FILTHY ALLEYWAY SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY--
--WHERE VERMIN OF THE TWO-LEGGED SORT SLEEFULLY CLOSE IN ON THEIR EVENING'S PREY...
NOW WHY WOULD WE WANNA HURT A SHARP LITTLE PIECE LIKE YOU, SWEETMEAT?
P-PLEASE-- LET ME GO!
D-DON'T HURT ME!
WE JUST WANNA PARTY, IS AL--
--AN' YOU GONNA BE THE GUEST OF HONOR!
N-NO-- P-- PLEASE!
YOU HEARD HER, SCUM!
NOW LET HER GO.
HUH?!
WHAT THE DEVIL IS THAT?!
THE DEVIL, YOU THINK?
YOU SPEAK MORE TRULY THAN YOU COULD EVER POSSIBLY KNOW!
HEY, THE ODDS ARE 3-TO-1 HERE, SKINNY!
WE S'POSED T'BE AFRAID OF YOU?
YOU WOULD BE, FOOL--
--IF YOU WERE WISE!
OKAY, THAT CUTS IT, CREEP! NOW I'M GONNA CUT YOU!

FIRST YOU, SPANKY--THEN THE TRAMP.
YEAH, THIS IS GONNA BE A REAL FUN NIGHT!
IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF FUN, VERMIN--
HUH--?!?
--PERHAPS IT'S TIME YOU LEARNED OF PAIN!
AARRGH!
KRAAK!
Y-YOU BROKE MY WRIST--!
FEEL FORTUNATE FOOL, THAT IT WASN'T YOUR MISERABLE NECK!
HURK--!
KRAK!!
THE PUNK HITS THE WALL HARD, AND BLOOD ERUPTS FROM HIS RUINED FACE LIKE JUICE FROM AN OVER-RIPE MELON--
--AND AT ONCE THE NEED IS UPON HIM.
OKAY, SO YOU COULD MAYBE TAKE PSYCHIE, FREAK--
--BUT YOU AIN'T NEVER GONNA TAKE ME!
TENSE FINGER FLEXES AROUND GLEAMING TRIGGER--

--AND THE STARTLED STREET PUNK NEVER EVEN HEARS THE SOUND OF THE SHOT THAT KILLS HIM!
UUNNGHH!
BOOM!
WHO--?!
OKAY, SO MAYBE YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THIS ONE, MONSTER-- --BUT THAT DOESN'T REALLY CHANGE ANY-THING BETWEEN US!
NO! YOU'RE NOT GETTIN' ME, MAN!
YOU AIN'T GONNA GET ME!!
RIP
BLAM!
BLAM!
AAARRRGHH!
BLAM!
THE WOUND IS ONLY FLESH-DEEP BUT STILL INCREDIBLY PAINFUL--
--AND THE LIVING VAMPIRE'S REACTION IS INSTANTANEOUS--
--AND POTENTIALLY LETHAL!
HHAARGH!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
KEEP AWAY!
NO! STAY AWAY FROM ME!
P-PLEASE-- DON'T HURT ME--!
YOU WANT MERCY ANIMAL? THEN I'LL SHOW YOU MERCY!
PRECISELY THE SAME SORT OF MERCY YOU WERE ABOUT TO SHOW HER!
NO-NO-- P-PLEASE--!

GO ON, MONSTER-- KILL THE LITTLE PUNK!
AT THAT, MORBIUS HESITATES, PAINFULLY AWARE OF THE VITAL CRIMSON LIQUID PULSING JUST INCHES FROM HIS SLAVERING FANGS--
--CALLING HIM--
--TAUNTING HIM--
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO, ISN'T IT? KILL PEOPLE?
-- BUT KNOWING, IN THAT MOMENT, THAT FOR WHAT REMAINS OF THE MAN WITHIN THE MONSTER, THERE IS ONLY ONE CHOICE TO MAKE...
NO!
IT'S OVER!
CALL THE POLICE, IF YOU WILL!
CALL THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT! I, FOR ONE, NO LONGER TRULY CARE!
HEY, WHERE IN BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, MONSTER?
IT IS OVER FOR ME, GUNTHER!
IF YOU STILL HAVE OLD DEBTS TO REPAY, THEN PAY THEM FORWARD, NOT BACK!
THAT YOUNG WOMAN NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION NOW FAR MORE THAN I.
DO YOU NEED VENGEANCE MORE?
THIS ISN'T OVER BETWEEN US!
BUT I-- I CAN'T JUST LET YOU--
--LET YOU--
--NO, YOU'RE RIGHT, BLAST IT!
THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH KILLING FOR ONE NIGHT--
--MORE THAN ENOUGH!
AND, WITH THAT, THE LIVING VAMPIRE IS GONE--
--TO ANSWER THE CALL OF THE NIGHT--
--AND THE HUNGER!
BUT RETURN TO YOUR OLD WAYS, MORBIUS--AND I SWEAR WE'LL MEET AGAIN!
THEN, FOR BOTH OUR SAKES GUNTHER--I PRAY THAT THIS IS GOODBYE!
THE END

MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED

EYES OF THE BEHOLDER

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artist—KLAUS JANSON
colorist—GREG WRIGHT
letterer—JANICE CHIANG

FROM THE LIGHT, DARKNESS

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letterer—DAVE THE BARBARIAN

ON THE WINGS OF ANGELS

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BLOOD IS THICKER...

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INTRO

Come down from swinging on webs between gleaming city skyscrapers. Leave behind the Rainbow Bridge of gods-as-heroes and journey past fantastically powered foursomes and rich Westchester estates populated by persecuted mutants. Go a step further yet, even lower than grim street vigilantes avenging murdered families, to the very edge of the Marvel Universe...

...and over to the dark underbelly that is home to the Midnight Sons.

Here, horror becomes an exciting new adventure as the superheroic combines with the supernatural in tales of chilling protagonists and charged action.

It's a shadowy landscape, lit foremost by the unrelenting flame of Ghost Rider, a living spirit of vengeance mysteriously channeled through young Dan Ketch to bring mystic chain and harsh penance down on the forces of darkness. Riding close by is John Blaze, linked to the occult by arcane means, determined to set wrongs right with a shotgun targeting the wicked and firing pure hellfire.

Traversing the line between sin and salvation, Dr. Michael Morbius fights a nightly battle for his and others' humanity, raging against an inner turmoil both scientific and demonic, the two combining to make him a living vampire.

Embroiled in a hunt for missing pages of the black magic tome called the Darkhold, Vicki Montesi, Sam Buchanan, Louise Hastings and the sorcerer Modred seek to redeem the victims of its foul spells.

Crossing every path in their own crusade are the Nightstalkers—Blade, Hannibal King and Frank Drake—armed with cold steel, lyncanthropic power and hi-tech ordnance aimed at bringing down the supernatural in all its forms, good and bad.

Together, these sons and daughters of the after-hours hold the line against villains working atrocities not up in the light, but down below, intent on eating away the underpinnings of the reality we think we know so well.

The night's blackness holds terrible evil. And the Midnight Sons are waiting there to face it down.

D.G. Chichester
Poughkeepsie, NY
January, 1993